

small businesses can obtain loans to keep their doors open and people employed; waiting for expanded health care and unemployment benefits for those in the tourism industry who have been laid off since September 11.

Mr. Speaker, like all Americans, Nevadans have waited too long for the Democratic leadership to start putting the welfare of this Nation and its economic prosperity ahead of their political priorities. It is time for an economic stimulus package to be passed by both Chambers of Congress and sent to the President and signed into law. America's economy, stability, and the individual prosperity of every American depends on it. Let us do it now.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The Chair would remind Members that remarks in debate may not include characterizations of Senate action or inaction.

CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT BIRTH OF CHRIST

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the school prayer issue is out of control, literally. Students in Pennsylvania were prohibited from handing out Christmas cards. Reports say students in Minnesota were disciplined for having said merry Christmas. Now if that is not enough to find coal in your athletic supporter, check this out: A school board in Georgia removed the word "Christmas" from their school calendar because the ACLU threatened to sue. Beam me up. If this is religious freedom, I am a fashion model for GQ.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the fact that Christmas is not about a jolly old fat man. Christmas is about the birth of Christ.

A JOB WELL DONE

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in 1984 the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) and myself were elected to Congress from adjoining districts. He started out sleeping in his congressional office, and I started out picketing then-majority leader Jim Wright, which the gentleman from Texas helped me do. He went on to become conference chairman of the Republican Conference and when the Republicans became the majority, majority leader.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) is a man of big ideas. It was his bill that began to streamline our military base positions in this country. He is also a supporter of school vouchers

and flat taxes. He came from can-do North Dakota, and he brags about that even though he now lives in Texas.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) did come, he did do. I say well done to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY).

REJECT RECOMMENDATIONS OF SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(Mr. UDALL of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, there are three good reasons we should reject the recent recommendations of the Social Security commission, this commission that has said that we should move in the direction of privatizing Social Security.

The first is the commission was stacked with individuals who had a preconceived notion of the outcome. Second, the commission recommends private accounts but does not take into consideration the cost. Many observers believe converting Social Security to private accounts would cost \$1 trillion. Where is that money to come from? Out of Social Security, of course.

And finally, private accounts invested in the market are risky investments. We only need to look at our recent downturn to see how risky these investments are. Are we going to throw people out on the streets in their golden years because they have lost their retirements in the market? I certainly hope not.

COMFORT THE KIDS

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the efforts of two Arizona families, the Porter family and the Rogers family. Following the September 11 attacks, Steve and Liz Porter and Todd and Mikki Rogers wanted to help those affected by the tragedies.

Together, these two families created a project called Comfort the Kids. Their goal was lofty, to create 10,000 small red, white and blue quilts for the children who have suffered family losses by the end of the year. They were not alone in their efforts. Their Web site, www.ComforTheKids.org, is currently receiving an average of one hit per minute. School districts, Boy Scouts and countless other families and individuals are joining them in their efforts. These quilts will not only comfort the recipient, but will serve as a hand-made symbol of compassion. I thank the Porter family and the Rogers family for their diligence and hard work, and commend them for their efforts. They represent the best of America.

SAVE AMERICAN STEEL INDUSTRY

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, today steelworkers from across the United States have come to Washington to ask our House to recognize their plight and the plight of U.S. Steel. Today the United States steel industry is faltering and in danger of collapse. Tens of thousands of men and women who have helped to secure the defense of this country through their work in creating and making this product called steel are in danger of losing their jobs and having their whole way of life be destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this country to ask itself whether or not it is in our national interest and in the interest of our national defense to maintain our steel industry; or shall we become dependent on foreign steel, the same way we are dependent on foreign oil.

This House will have an opportunity before we complete our business to address the issues, to give the steelworkers some relief, to make it possible for steel loan guarantees to be more widely applicable, to give an opportunity for net operating loss to put cash into steel companies so they can keep going. This Congress has an obligation to carry forth for the future of this country our ability to make steel.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). Members are again reminded not to characterize the actions of the Senate.

CALLING FOR LEGISLATION TO AID THE STEEL INDUSTRY

(Mr. CARDIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues have talked about before we go home, we must pass a stimulus package. I agree that we cannot go home without doing something for the people who have lost their jobs as a result of the recession and the attack on our country. And we must do something for the steelworkers so they do not become part of the people collecting unemployment insurance in our community. We have to protect the retirees for the health benefits that they are currently receiving.

We need to do this because the price of steel in this country is below cost, international cost, because our trade policies have allowed dumped, subsidized steel to come into the United States. Our own trade policy has reduced capacity so we have what is known as legacy cost, high cost for the steel industry for retirees.

This House, this body, must pass legislation helping the steel industry before we leave town. It is our responsibility to do it. We must create a level playing field. If we do, steel in the